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GUAM USA: AMERICA'S FORWARD FORTRESS IN ASIA PACIFIC

BY

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GUAM USA: AMERICA'S FORWARD FORTRESS IN ASIA PACIFIC

Ву

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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During the final stages of World War II, Japan was finally defeated through the strategic use of the Marianas Islands as a jumping-off point for power projection into the heart of Japan. The main island, Guam, and her northern sister islands, Saipan and Tinian, were the hub from which American forces inched northward towards Japan. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, believed in the strategic value of the Marianas because he moved his Pacific Ocean Areas headquarters to Guam where he could better direct joint forces operations closer to Japan.

Guam, Saipan, and Tinian were used as staging bases from which over 500,000 troops and approximately 1,500 ships were readied for their move on Okinawa. It was from these islands where U.S. B-29's took off for bombing raids on Japanese cities and where the Enola Gay began its mission to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Like World War II, the U.S. military should withdraw all its foreign bases in the Asia Pacific region and return to Guam and possibly, the Marianas which are United States soil and make it their hub of operations. We can still maintain a strategic forward military presence from Guam and feasibly project our military power deep into Asia to protect America's vital interests in peace and regional stability. We will be near, yet far enough away from Asia to do so.

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GUAM USA: AMERICA'S FORWARD FORTRESS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

GUAM: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

GUAM'S DESCRIPTION

Guam is located in the Western Pacific on the fringe of Asia. It is slightly above the equator approximately 4000 miles southwest of the U.S. State of Hawaii and about 1500 miles south of Japan and 1500 miles east of the Philippines. It is the westernmost piece of U.S. real estate on the western side of the international dateline, 4 time zones earlier than Hawaii and one day ahead. As such, Guam is strategically located near Asia. It is one of America's most important bastions of defense. Guam is the largest and southernmost island in the Mariana Islands. Among all the islands in the North Pacific, it is the largest between Hawaii and the Philippines and between Japan and New Guinea. It has an area of approximately 225 square miles, about the same size as the country of Singapore. It is about 35 miles long and 4 to 10 miles wide. The northern part of the island is generally flat although it sits on a high plateau and is well-suited for airfields. The southern part is very scenic and mountainous with breathtaking views of both the Pacific Ocean and the Philippine Sea. Like the rest of the Marianas, Guam is volcanic in origin. In fact, there are still some active volcanoes in the northern Marianas.

AMERICAN PERIOD 1898-1941

Prior to the capture of Guam by the U.S. in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, the island was under the sovereign control of Spain since March 6, 1521 when Magellan discovered the island.² Thus, for over 377 years, Guam was a remote and relatively unknown island to the rest of the world until that fateful day on June 20, 1898 when the U.S.S. Charleston, commanded by Captain Henry Glass, entered Guam's Apra Harbor and fired ten cannon shots to let the Spanish know the U.S. was at war with Spain. However, because of Guam's remote location, the Spanish captain of the port did not know of any war involving Spain when he sailed out to greet the ship. It was only upon boarding the ship and being informed by Captain Glass when he became aware. He was given a letter to deliver to the Governor of Guam, Lieutenant Colonel Don Juan Marina, demanding the surrender of the island. The very next day, Colonel Marina complied without any loss of life. Thus, the island became a territory of the United States as one of the "spoils" of the Spanish-American War of 1898. Since that time, until the invasion and capture of Guam by the Japanese in World War II, the island was used as a coaling station by the U.S. Navy. The island was governed by a naval administration until 1950 when the people were granted U.S. citizenship by the federal government through the

enactment of the Organic Act of Guam. The Act established a formal civilian government and designated Guam as an unincorporated territory of the U.S. The U.S. lost control of the island during the Japanese occupation in December 1941 until July 1944 when the U.S. military reclaimed the island.⁴

DURING WORLD WAR II

Prior to World War II, Guam was practically unknown to most Americans although it had been a part of America for over 43 years when war broke out between Japan and the United States. Guam was attacked, invaded and occupied by Japanese Imperial forces almost simultaneously with the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, unlike Hawaii, Guam was the only U.S. real estate occupied by the Japanese during World War II for two and a half years. 5 During the Japanese occupation, the people of Guam suffered under the brutal hands of the Japanese. Because of their strong patriotism towards America, many civilians including women were executed by the Japanese when it became apparent U.S. forces would soon be retaking the island.6 World War II made the island well-known to Americans of that time. Guam changed from a virtually unknown U.S. island to a Japanese-occupied U.S. territory that must be reclaimed from Japanese Imperial forces at all costs. Thousands of lives were lost and many more thousands were injured in the battle to recapture the island. Most of the dead and injured were Japanese while only a small fraction were Americans. 1,283 U.S. servicemen were killed. 5,719 wounded, and 329 missing in action while 10,971 Japanese were killed and many thousands wounded. Thus, on August 15, 1944, Guam was officially liberated and was once again under the control of the United States.7

The fight for Guam foretold the important role Guam would have in the Pacific war against Japan. With the liberation of Guam, U.S. Navy leaders saw their dream of "Fortress Guam" become a reality. After a massive military buildup and construction of bases, Guam and her sister islands in the Northern Marianas, Saipan and Tinian, became springboards for the invasion against Iwo Jima and Okinawa in the Ryukyus situated just south of the Japanese mainland and against Japan as a final objective. Guam, Saipan, and Tinian were used as staging bases for over 500,000 troops and about 1500 allied ships which were being readied for the planned invasions to the north starting with Okinawa, then Iwo Jima and finally Japan. Additionally, over 1,000 B-29 Superfortress bombers were stationed in these islands and used against these Japanese targets. From these three islands, the U.S. was able to bring the war to Japan by bombing key Japanese cities which led to Japan's unconditional surrender. While hundreds of B-29 bombers flew out of Guam and her sister islands, it was from Tinian,

approximately 120 miles to the north of Guam, where atomic bombs were loaded on B-29's for their targets in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The surrender of Japan afterwards is history.⁸

Prior to this, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, U.S. Navy, as both the Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC Fleet) and Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA), saw the strategic value of Guam for military operations against Japanese targets. Shortly after the liberation of Guam in 1944, Admiral Nimitz moved his entire CINCPAC Fleet/CINCPOA Pacific headquarters there so he could better direct the war effort against Japan. Thus, the island became the forward operating main base in the Pacific while Hawaii became a rear area. Hundreds of millions of dollars were pumped into these islands to build up base infrastructure and logistics. However, most of the construction dollars went to Guam. Guam is the only island among the Marianas with U.S. military bases still being currently used.⁹

AFTER WORLD WAR II

Today, Guam is home to over 110,000 residents, of which approximately 49,000 are of native Chamorro ancestry. The military population, including dependents, numbers around 18,000 due to federal reductions in military appropriations in the aftermath of the Cold War. Prior to that, the military population averaged around 35,000. Guam still plays an important strategic role today because of its modern commercial shipping and airport facilities. Guam is the Western Pacific base for the U.S. Seventh Fleet and headquarters for Commander, Naval Forces Marianas. It was mistakenly down-sized several years ago as confirmed by Pacific Command, Commander-in-Chief (PACOM CINC) Admiral Dennis Blair, U.S. Navy, during a 2001 visit to Guam when he admitted "they had made a mistake in down-sizing Guam...had cut too deep...and now want to hold on to some infrastructure they had originally intended to turn over to the Government of Guam.¹¹ Despite a reduced operation, Guam is still considered a "fortress" with the permanent basing of several U.S. Navy installations and one U.S. Air Force base throughout the island.

The main naval base, U.S. Naval Station, Apra Harbor, is where Guam's largest deep water port is located and where several forwarddeployed naval and prepositioned ships are permanently based. The other bases include the U.S. Naval Magazine, U.S. Navy Regional Medical Center, U.S. Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station (NCTAMS), Military Sealift Command Office, U.S. Navy HC 5 Helicopter Squadron based at Andersen Air Force Base, U.S. Navy Construction Battalion (CB's) and the U.S. Coast Guard. The U.S. Naval Air Station (Brewer Field) in Hagatna was closed down more than eight years ago and transferred to the Government of Guam due to political pressures from both Guam

political and business leaders due to an urgent need for a civilian international airport because Guam's tourism numbers were fast approaching 1.5 million tourists per year. As a result, the Navy moved the HC 5 helicopter squadron to Andersen Air Force Base from Brewer Field on a joint-use agreement because Andersen Air Force base was only 10 miles to the north and underutilized. The odd thing about Andersen is that it has no assigned planes of its own despite its ability and capacity to serve as an air base as the Vietnam War had demonstrated. Three other strategically important naval installations, other than U.S. Naval Station in Apra Harbor, are described below.

The U.S. Naval Magazine is the largest ammunition storage area on U.S. soil outside the continental United States. During the Vietnam War, it provided storage for the B-52 bombs used in that conflict. Today, it continues to support the entire Pacific region which qualifies it as a strategic installation.¹³

The Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station (NCTAMS) also has a strategic mission by providing communications support for the command and control of operating forces afloat and ashore in the Western Pacific including the Indian Ocean.¹⁴

The Military Sealift Command Office (MSCO), Guam, is also located on Naval Station and provides logistic and operational support for Military Sealift Commandcontrolled vessels. They include two ammunition ships, three combat ships, one fleet tug, and the chartered vessels of Maritime Prepositioning Squadron THREE. As part of the MSC organization, its mission is to provide ocean transportation of equipment, fuel, supplies and ammunition to sustain U.S. forces worldwide. The Guam MSCO controls the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean as its area of responsibility and thus, oversees the MSC detachment in Singapore and an MSC unit in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Since 1962, the MSCO coordinated and loaded thousands of tons of ammunition supplies for the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War. ¹⁵

DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

During the Vietnam Conflict, Guam played a key role but not on the same magnitude as it did during WWII. Guam was used both as a transit point and forwarddeployed air base during the Vietnam War. It was used as the takeoff point for hundreds of B-52 Stratofortress bombers involved in the "Arc Light" and "Linebacker II" missions. These bombers were forward deployed to Guam. From there, the bombers flew thousands of sorties against Vietnam. These missions were conducted between June 18, 1965 and August 15, 1973. Missions were also flown simultaneously from U Tapao Airfield in Thailand and Kadena Air Force Base, in Okinawa.

The combined number of sorties during the period totaled 130,000, a majority of them from Guam. Because of Guam's location, the Eighth Air Force moved its headquarters from Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts, to the island on April 1, 1970 taking over operations from the Third Air Division. The bombers were able to fly from Guam to Vietnam nonstop with only one in-air refueling needed. The availability of the U.S. Naval Magazine and lower security concerns played a part in the decision to station the bombers to Guam.¹⁶

NATIONAL SECURITY AND MILITARY STRATEGIES FOR ASIA-PACIFIC

Although there are three core objectives of the National Security Strategy, this paper will only discuss the most important objective which requires the use of military forces as a means of achieving it. The core objective of "enhancing America's security at home and abroad" reflects vital national interests: the physical security of U.S. territory and that of our allies, the safety of U.S. citizens at home and abroad, the economic well-being of our society, and the protection of critical infrastructure from attack. The objectives related to these interests in the Asia-Pacific region, are to assure regional stability and peaceful coexistence among Asian nations. The ways to achieve these ends are our forward military presence and freedom of navigation which will require our military forces as the means. Thus, the National Military Strategy for the Asia-Pacific region is designed to achieve the regional security and stability mentioned above. Part of the strategy of forward military presence is forward military deterrence. To make deterrence effective, the military must be involved in peacetime engagement activities such as defense cooperation, security assistance, training and exercises with allies and friends to deter aggression, building coalitions, promoting regional stability or simply serving as role models for militaries of emerging democracies.

The policy goals of the defense strategy set forth in the current Quadrennial Defense Review document are as follows:

- 1. Assuring allies and friends---This means that our friends must be assured of the U.S. commitment to maintain a U.S. military forward presence in order to respond to regional threats against any Asian ally or friend. We must show that we can be relied upon as a security partner since our credibility is at stake. We must assist in creating a favorable balance of power to deter aggression or coercion through security cooperation among Asian nations.¹⁹
- 2. <u>Dissuading future military competition</u>---A well-targeted strategy and policy can discourage other countries tempted to challenge or compete with the United States from starting future military competitions. It can do this by maintaining or enhancing significant advantages in major areas of military capabilities.²⁰

3. <u>Deterring threats and coercion against U.S. interests---</u>The military must have a range of options to discourage aggression or coercion. U.S. forces can discourage future threats through a forward deterrence in critical areas of Asia-Pacific. This will require the continuous upgrading of forward deployed and stationed forces along with global intelligence, strike and information assets with a minimum of reinforcement from outside the theater. These will include the strategic basing of our military forces to enable them to quickly respond in time to crises, non-nuclear forces with the ability to strike with precision at fixed and mobile targets in the AOR, passive defenses, and "rapidly deployable and sustainable" forces that can decisively defeat any aggressor.²¹

The question is how far forward the military should be. Without question, routine patrols to ensure freedom of navigation of both sea and air are mandatory. In the meantime, the presence of U.S. troops in both Japan and Korea is satisfactory although it is causing some adverse reactions. But should the two Koreas unite and Japan takes full responsibility for its defense, we may find ourselves out of these two countries. That is why it is so important to start the planning process now in anticipation of the unknown. However, there is a possible solution: make a strategic move to a permanent location where the U.S. has full legal rights to expand its personnel, weaponry, logistics, equipment, and base infrastructure. At the same time, it must be at a location far enough away to remove any justification or excuse for a potential competitor to speed up expansion and modernization of their military yet close enough to our allies and friends to demonstrate our commitment to them to remain in the region. It is apparent that our allies' objection to increasing military personnel in both Japan and Korea or in another country in the region is based on appeasing China.²² The obvious location then is Guam and if needed, her sister islands in the Northern Marianas.

JUSTIFICATION FOR FORWARD MILITARY PRESENCE VIA GUAM

President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said: "We have learned...that we cannot live alone at peace. We have learned that our own well being is dependent on the well being of other nations far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community."²³ As we enter the 21st century, FDR's words still ring true even today. At this period of rapid globalization, events on the other side of the world can affect our safety and prosperity at home. Therefore, we must know what events have occurred, are occurring, or potentially will happen in the future within the Asia Pacific region if the U.S. is going to deal with them in a manner that will produce the end result of regional stability and thus, the well-being so necessary for the security of the United States on the other side of the globe. There is

evidence of a new focus on the Asia-Pacific region by the Department of Defense. There are plans to move weapons and other warfighting equipment from Europe to Asia. Army Secretary Thomas White left open the possibility the Army may expand or reconfigure its presence in the Asia-Pacific region. It is interesting to note that Secretary White was asked by reporters whether the Army is considering basing troops on Guam. Although he was noncommittal, he mentioned that all services are looking for opportunities for forward basing in the Pacific Rim. The Army has 29,000 soldiers based permanently in Japan and South Korea and if the U.S. puts more troops, weapons and equipment in the region, it would "cause consternation among allies and others." This seems to support the concept of relocating troops from Korea and Japan to Guam-if required by future circumstances.

Derek Mitchell, a specialist in Asian affairs at the Department of Defense (DOD) during the Clinton administration supported White's assertion pertaining to allies' opposition to troop expansion in Asia. Mitchell stated that "while U.S. allies in the region rely on U.S. military support, they would be made uneasy by any sign of a sizable U.S. military buildup.²⁵ Lastly, in the same article, it was mentioned that analysts in Hawaii, Guam, and Taiwan welcomed such plans to move equipment and weaponry.

THE TWO KOREAS

In June 2000, the leaders of South and North Korea held a summit in Pyongyang which raised the possibility of the two Koreas reconciling or formally uniting. In the process, North Korea relaxed its hostile posture towards its southern sister. The summit produced some agreements including "visits by separated family members" and "economic cooperation and exchange in all fields" with a predicted positive effect on North Korea's economy, which would open up to outside influence.²⁶ A unified Korea would encounter a completely changed security environment and would have to make certain vital decisions such as whether they would continue to host U.S. military forces in their country; whether they would continue to maintain the currently large military machine; whether they would continue the North's ballistic missile program, and finally, what their policy should be towards China and Japan. There is a possibility that unification or reconciliation may result in the U.S. being forced to abandon its military bases in South Korea since the main reason for their presence was for the deterrence of invasion by North Korea. Although North Korean leader Kim Jong II supposedly expressed the view during the summit that a U.S. military presence in a unified Korea would be beneficial to oppose pressures from China, Russia and Japan, this is difficult to accept in light of his consistent past negative public stance against the U.S. Furthermore, China is expected to

oppose the continued presence of U.S. military forces in Korea next to its border. Currently, there are a significant percentage of South Koreans who oppose the presence of U.S. bases in Korea. Although a new Korea may want to keep the U.S. military bases as insurance against future problems with Japan or China, deterrence can still be provided from outside Korea.

First of all, the withdrawal of most or all U.S. forces from a unified Korea to Guam and the Northern Marianas should reduce tensions with China. By withdrawing to a location approximately 1500 miles away, this should relieve some pressure from China and other Asian countries who do not want to see any expansion of U.S. military forces in their immediate area. This action may eliminate any urgency for a competing power to expand and modernize its armed forces.

Second, Guam is near enough to Korea and Japan to respond to any crisis within several hours by aircraft and within several days by ship. With the aid of good intelligence, the U.S. should not expect any serious conflicts to arise in East or Southeast Asia overnight. With adequate and advance warning, the U.S. military should be able to project its power from Guam.

Both the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report of 2001 and a RAND study support military expansion of the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Marines, and possibly the U.S. Army on Guam as well as the development of bases. The QDR mentions the increase of aircraft carrier battle group presence in the Western Pacific and options for home porting cruise missile submarines and surface combatant ships. ³⁰ The RAND study recommended the buildup of Guam as a major hub of power projection throughout Asia with sufficient stockpiles of ammunition, spare parts, equipment and other logistics to support the rapid deployment of U.S. Air Force assets anywhere in the Asia Pacific region. The RAND study specified basing 100150 fighters, up to 50 long-range bombers, and an unspecified number of C-130 aircraft for permanent stationing at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam.³¹ These, combined with the firepower of aircraft carrier battle groups, should provide adequate deterrence against any aggressor in the region.

JAPAN

Japan has already begun to build up its military strength in response to the North Korean missile programs and China's military modernization. Some suggest this buildup is a step toward Japan's breaking free of its alliance with the U.S.³² Japan has recently shown a desire to participate militarily outside its territory to assist in international operations such as in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO).³³ Its southern province, Okinawa, has also voiced strong opposition to the continued basing of U.S. forces in its boundaries due to occasional but highly

publicized criminal acts perpetrated by U.S. military personnel against its population. The Japanese media have provided expanded coverage of each incident, perhaps more so than with other crimes committed by Japanese nationals. Just recently, a delegation of twelve political leaders traveled to Guam to see if the island would be willing to accept the transfer of troops from Okinawa. During this meeting with Guam officials, they were told that Guam would welcome a military buildup. The Okinawans were looking at promoting the transfer of both U.S. Air Force and Marine units to Guam. ³⁴

It is also possible that the Japanese may be contemplating the reduction of commitment to the region by the U.S. or that it might not be a reliable ally against a threat to Japan base on their belief that U.S. intelligence failed to warn them about the 1988 North Korean missile launch. As a result of this failure, Japan has authorized funds to purchase four reconnaissance satellites. More incidents of this sort could influence Japan to take more responsibility for its own defense. Unlike other poorer Asian nations, Japan is a major economic power and could easily afford to expand its military to such an extent that Japanbased U.S. forces would no longer be needed. If Japan succeeds in amending its constitution, giving it the authority to provide for its own defense and the freedom to involve itself in external military operations, Japan could provide for its own defense and secure its own sea and air lines of communication. Secure its own sea and air lines of communication.

Whether this may cause further problems with both China and the Koreas remains to be seen and all three countries are keeping a cautious eye out for Tokyo. Chinese and Korean relations with the Japanese were already strained with Tokyo's approval of history textbooks that glorify Japan's imperialist past. Another was Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, which memorializes Japan's war dead and which include several Japanese war criminals. Additionally, there is a dispute between Seoul and Tokyo over fishing rights around Japan's northern waters and islands controlled by Russia but claimed by Japan. There is an even more serious disagreement over Tokdo/Takeshima Island in the Sea of Japan. In late September, the Japanese sank a South Korean fishing vessel in the area. Finally, when Japan launched an H-2A rocket successfully, North Korea claimed it was a scheme to arm Japan with ballistic missiles. In response, North Korea warned it may restart its longrange missile/satellite launching program.³⁷ Apparently, these countries still fear that Japan, as Asia's largest industrial power, might one day become a military threat again.

Nevertheless, once the Japanese are able to take total responsibility for the defense of their country, U.S. forces should also move from Japan and Okinawa to Guam. The primary reasons for our continued presence in Japan in the first place are to provide supporting forces in

the event of a North Korean invasion of South Korea and for the defense of Japan against attack by a hostile power. Again, since we are only hours away from Japan and Korea by plane and several days by ship or submarine, U.S. military forces can still respond in a timely manner from Guam. It is inconceivable to believe that all our military assets in Guam would be idle at the same time, waiting for a crisis to happen. The U.S. military can still maintain a forward presence in Asia by dispatching its military assets on a continuous basis from Guam. With the permanent basing of at least two aircraft battle groups in Guam, one battle group can be patrolling Asjan waters while the other stays in port for maintenance and welfare and morale purposes. Each would alternate with the other. Longrange bombers and jet aircraft could also be flying training missions in the Asia Pacific region. The U.S. Navy is currently expanding its naval assets on Guam with the planned, permanent basing of more than a dozen cruise nuclear submarines on that island, starting with the USS San Francisco and USS City of Corpus Christi this year.³⁸ The U.S. Congressional Budget Office recommended moving seven submarines to Guam by 2015 and another four by 2025 for a total permanent basing of 14 submarines³⁹ Even if Japan fails to amend its constitution to allow foran expanded military role by Japanese armed forces, the U.S. Navy should still move some of its aircraft carrier battle groups to Guam. Guam has already experienced several visits by the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk and the U.S.S. Independence proving Guam's harbor is deep enough for Navy carriers to navigate through. Admittedly, Apra Harbor would need additional dredging in several areas and hundreds of millions of dollars invested to provide home port facilities for these giant ships as well as community infrastructure expansion for the entire island of Guam. The bottom line is that if Guam and the Marianas could harbor 1500 ships and 500,000 military personnel during World War II, then it makes no sense to think it would be unable to homeport two or more carrierbattle groups.

Lastly, the removal of U.S. Marines and Air Force from Okinawa would also reduce tensions with the Okinawans as mentioned above. The only problem that may negate the basing of a large contingent of Marines at the present time is the lack of firing ranges in Guam. However, the idea of moving a brigade or two of Marines to Guam is still achievable as long as they are periodically allowed to fire crew-served weapons off- island in Hawaii or perhaps Australia or the Philippines. Another possibility is to construct the necessary ranges on an uninhabited island in the Northern Marianas. Also, the development of technology in the future of advanced firing simulators which provide identical results as actual live fires, may negate the need for firing ranges altogether, whether they are for tanks, artillery, mortars, or any other crew-served weapons.

The movement of an Air Force wing to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam would finally give the base aircraft of its own. Since hundreds of B-29's were stationed in Guam during World War II at Andersen, the air base can easily handle the arrival of an air wing. The Air Force has known about Guam's strategic location for quite some time. For the first time, it has moved cruise missiles outside the continental U.S. (CONUS) to Guam. The Space Daily article also mentioned that the U.S. Air Force has been working to turn Andersen AFB into a forward operating base for long-range bombers because "Guam is an ideal position from which to project power throughout the Asia Pacific region." However, like the Navy, the Air Force needs untold millions of dollars to build additional barracks and housing facilities for servicemen and their dependents.

Another advantage of moving to Guam is that the population loves the military and wants an expansion as well. 42

CHINA, TAIWAN AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Of all the Asian countries in the region, the biggest perceived threat by countries in the area is China. China's occupation in 1995 of Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea and its military exercises and diplomacy to pressure Taiwan to reunite with her has also been seen as strong evidence of its aggressive nature. Other than Russia, India, and Japan, China's neighbors may not have the ability to stand up against such a powerful China on their own.⁴³

The reaction of the Republic of the Philippines towards China's action in the South China Sea in building permanent wharf structures on Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, caused it to sign a visiting forces agreement with the U.S. in February 1998. This appears to be a reverse course in the Philippine policy regarding U.S. military relations. His appears to be a reverse course in the Philippine policy regarding U.S. military relations. Mischief Reef may serve as a "wake-up call" for Asia. The importance of the South China Sea cannot be overemphasized. The South China Sea is home to two of the world's most traveled sea lines of communications (SLOC's). The east-west route connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the north-south route connects Northeast Asia to Australia and New Zealand. Approximately half of the world's merchant fleets pass through these SLOC's as well as those around Indonesia. They are the lifelines for the Asian economy. Northeast Asia receives oil and other imports through these SLOC's and sends finished products to the rest of the world in return. Thus, it is important to the economies of the entire Asia-Pacific region that these SLOC's are never disrupted by any country or by modern-day pirates. Were this to happen, it would seriously disrupt shipping and international trade.

The U.S. has a vital interest to keep these sea lanes open for freedom of navigation. These sea lanes are extremely important to the U.S. for the movement of forces from the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. The U.S. also has an interest in denying access to these SLOC's from both conventional and non-conventional freedom of navigation threats. This area has been a source of friction for a number of countries with China. Both China and Taiwan lay claim to the entire South China Sea, affecting claims to the Spratly Islands and the ongoing disputes among all claimants with China. These disputes are due in large part to commercial fishing rights and the possible rich deposits of oil and natural gas in the area. Another source of dispute is each country's nationalist sentiments and their claims to territorial sovereignty rights.⁴⁵ If China is able to project territorial claims hundreds of miles from its shores over the claims of weaker nations closer to the contested territory, this is evidence China may force itself against weaker nations in the future like a "neighborhood bully" if U.S. influence or deterrence through a forward presence is reduced.

At some point in time, a much more powerful China may decide to take Taiwan by force despite U.S. warnings, thus, the Taiwan situation is rife with dangerous possibilities regarding a future conflict between the U.S. and China. As it stands now, the Taiwanese seem to be moving toward a direction of independence but China wants Taiwan to adopt the One China doctrine and agree to reunification under communist rule. Taiwan, as a new democracy with a booming economy is naturally opposed to communism. ⁴⁶ China's most overt military aggressiveness was towards Taiwan during that island nation's firstever presidential election in 1996 when China fired unarmed ballistic missiles near Taiwan's coasts as a warning. It also conducted small-scale naval and air exercises that included a simulated amphibious invasion. The Taiwanese took the threat seriously. In response, the U.S. sent two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait as a hint that it may come to Taiwan's aid if attacked. ⁴⁷This situation opens up three possible courses of action for China:

First, China could take Taiwan by force. If it does, China can expect the U.S. to go to the defense of Taiwan. This may result in a major war between China and the U.S. and its allies.

Second, China could transform into a democracy at which time Taiwan may willingly reunite. It is the U.S. hope that with China's growing economy, the sophistication of its people through their access to the Internet, expanding per capita income, and the allowance of capitalism in its country, these factors may one day influence a democratic government. Economic factors could outweigh political differences to bring the two governments closer

together. Favorable conditions in China towards more openness, respect for human rights, and democracy could generate more trust by Taiwan and start the path to a peaceful settlement.⁴⁸

Third, China can continue to threaten Taiwan through periodic military exercises, as it has done in the past, but with China stopping short of actually attacking Taiwan and taking it by force.

China has produced a "white paper" which basically restated China's right to use force against Taiwan if it seeks to perpetuate the current de facto independence and refuses to negotiate on reunification "over a long period of time". The publication of the white paper produced some speculation of a possible deadline of 2010 for the reunification. If this speculation becomes true, this will have a major effect on the policies of Asian countries. How the U.S. reacts to the use of force will be the determining factor for these countries. Failure of the U.S. to respond to China's use of force would destroy U.S. credibility and may force neighboring states to align themselves with China.

Beyond the Taiwan issue, many Asian countries wonder whether a strong China might have imperialistic ambitions in the future since it has made territorial claims against many of its neighbors. It has territorial settlement issues with India, conflicting claims in the South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes with Vietnam and Japan. In cases where formal agreements have been reached over land borders, there is fear that a strong China may renege on these claims. Additionally, China may want to exert a "sphere of influence" in East Asia.

Nevertheless, most Asian states treat the Chinese threat as nonexistent for the present and something to deal at a later time. China has only a minor influence on the policies of most countries. The only exception may be India and Japan. India's nuclear tests in 1998 are related to China's military power. For example, their ballistic missile range goes beyond Pakistan. Japan, on the other hand has revised the U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines after the Chinese military pressure tactics against Taiwan. This revision expressed this concern.

The entire region for now will be continually assessing Chinese politicalmilitary developments as well as U.S. national security and military strategies for the region before making formal changes in their policies. ⁵² If any major power were to achieve a near level of sophistication in terms of armaments, a modernized military and the funds to finance it to a proximate though unequal level with the U.S., it would be the People's Republic of China once it becomes as prosperous as Japan.

While many Asian countries are seriously concerned about China's armed forces modernization and whether China may become a dangerous threat in the future, in reality, its offensive capabilities are very limited. The most common scenarios posited are those involving

an attack on Taiwan for forced reunification or against any member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) relative to the Spratty Islands and for control of the South China Sea.⁵³ China's ability to achieve success in either scenario is questionable or deemed impossible by some analysts, but there is no question about China's ability to harass. With both Taiwan and ASEAN countries undergoing a much faster military buildup and modernization. China's capability is declining in comparison.⁵⁴ Although China's People's Liberation Army continues to be the world's largest based solely on numbers, its weapons procurement has been cut so much since the early 1970's that almost all troops have been equipped with old and nearly obsolete weapons. Interestingly, China's cuts in its military actually took place before the Cold War cuts made by the U.S. and Russia. 55 Only the Chinese navy (PLAN) got to increase its strength by building two or three destroyers and frigates each year during the 1980's. This has slowed down, however, to about one per year in order to take advantage of Russia's bargain sales of its Sovremenny-class destroyers and Russian Kilo class submarines. China's submarine force decreased from over 100 in the early 1980's to about 50 at present.⁶ This lower priority in military modernization might be explained by former President Deng Xiaoping's proclamation in 1978 of the "four modernizations" of industry, agriculture, science and technology, and the military as China's national goals. Among the four, military modernization came in last.57

Many articles have been written predicting that China's military modernization will transform it into a superpower which will threaten the balance of power in Asia someday. However, James Nolt of the <u>Taiwan Security Research</u> pointed out that despite China's phenomenal economic growth, it is in reality becoming weaker militarily in comparison to Taiwan and all of its other possible rivals. Nolt also held the position that China's military equipment is the most backward for a large or medium-sized power, inferior even to Iraq's armament.⁵⁸

In contrast, many countries feel that China may become a potential danger to the region. They come to this conclusion due to China's recent purchases of military equipment from Russia, including Russian-made Su-30 fighter bombers with C-801 anti-ship cruise missiles. The cruise missile upgrade will give the air force a new kind of strike capability against ships from the air.⁵⁹ It is true China is undergoing some modernization of its military but how much and what is being modernized? The largest portion of the military is not a beneficiary of this effort. Indeed, China has been purchasing more modern military hardware from Russia, as has been mentioned earlier, but, the modernization has been small compared to the overall needs of its armed forces.⁶⁰ In comparison, Taiwan has been procuring modern weaponry during the 1990's for its entire armed forces with new missiles, warships, aircraft and tanks. Another

consideration about China's level of threat is its navy and air force. Both lack combat experience and adequate training. Also the age of many of their ships and planes make them unreliable, cutting available training in half. The Chinese navy hardly ever sets sail. The army does not have frequent training exercises or maneuvers. All these considerations put together should cast doubt on China's offensive capability, at least for the present time. Thus, China has shown no hurry to expand its military forces and appears not to be too great a threat to the region.

The last argument against China being a threat is based on a wellknown Chinese scholar's claim that the U.S. is not an enemy of China and may never be. The reason for the statement was the September 11th terrorist attack in New York and against the Pentagon. China and the U.S. agreed to work together and fight global terrorism. Many Chinese and American analysts and officials believed just a few months earlier that relations between China and the U.S. were heading toward confrontation possibly over Taiwan. But President Jiang Zemin realized China's interests lay with Washington and has even turned over intelligence on Islamic radicals. This new spirit of cooperation was a result of a faceto-face meeting between Bush and Jiang on October 19, 2001 during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Shanghai. After the meeting, Bush called China "a great power" that could accomplish much if they worked together to fight terrorism. Even more astounding was Jiang Zemin's expressed desire to be invited to President Bush's Texas ranch as a friend of the U.S. This opens up a rare opportunity for friendly relations and cooperation between China and the U.S. This may help reconfigure China's role as a regional partner rather than competitor.

Although China is still a Communist nation, it allows capitalistic nations like the U.S., Japan, South Korea, and even Taiwan to invest billions of dollars within its boundaries and is enjoying economic prosperity from it. Currently, Chira is not undergoing a massive military expansion or modernization as it concentrates its efforts in improving its agriculture, economy and science and technology. Lately, China has been relatively peaceful towards its neighbors and it has been almost 6 years since the last threatening, full-scale, Chinese military exercise against Taiwan. Things have also been relatively quiet in the South China Sea. Could it be that with China's recent inclusion into the World Trade Organization, the granting of "most favored trading nation," its selection by the World Olympic Committee as an Olympic site, and finally the booming economic prosperity the Chinese are experiencing, that China now wants to become a full-fledged member of the civilized world community? China must know that whenever it flexes its muscle and displays aggression towards its neighbors or the world community, it is not in their best interests. Thus, we should give China the benefit of the doubt and have an optimistic,

yet cautious attitude toward China. With patience and our continued usage of our diplomatic, political, informational, and economic tools, there may be no need for the military tool, if China adopts a democratic form of government. There is always a chance the ruling regime may accept the concept of democracy if there is enormous pressure to adopt it from the informed majority of the population including members of the Chinese armed forces. An added advantage is that this is one way to get Taiwan to reunite with China. The Chinese are not blind. They can see the benefits of democracy and their relationship to a vigorous economy which is also dependent on an open-market and capitalistic system of trade. It sees these benefits in the U.S. and even in its problem child, Taiwan.

How do all these considerations relate to Guam being a major hub for U.S. military forward presence in Asia Pacific as they apply to China or any other major regional competitor?

First, forward military presence can still be maintained through routine patrols of the area by U.S. Navy carrier battle groups and U.S Air Force aircraft permanently stationed in Guam, only 1500 miles away. The stationing of combatready U.S. Marine and possibly U.S. Army units on Guam can be readily deployed as a quickreaction force pending the arrival of augmentation forces from within PACOM or from other major commands. From Guam, the U.S. military can keep a watchful eye out for the region, should it be selected as its main hub for operations. One very important argument for building up Guam's bases is China's declared preference for U.S. power and influence to be reduced because it views our forward presence at this time to be excessive. China may try to limit U.S. military bases and access in East and Southeast Asia and to lessen U.S. ties to allies like Japan and South Korea or even a unified Korea.⁶⁵ If we are forced to limit our access to some of our current allies through their denial of bases or forward operating locations (FOL's) for our use, then the argument for Guam's expansion is made stronger. China would be hardpressed to criticize any massive buildup in Guam due to the fact that America has a fundamental right to increase any amount of military forces on its own soil. This would be significantly different from any buildup in countries closer to China. However, the question is how to engage China as we ponder its intentions.

Second, we can engage China by reducing its concerns about the immediate presence of military bases in Asian countries. Luckily, as discussed above, China has given military expansion and modernization a priority three levels below its booming economy. Perhaps, this is due to its observation that although the U.S. is in the immediate area, the U.S. has shown no imperialistic ambitions nor taken any aggressive action towards China or its neighbors. But we cannot be certain that these are China's reasons for giving a low priority to its military. It is in the best interests of the U.S. to remove any excuse for China to modernize and enlarge its

military. One way to do this is to decrease our military presence in Japan and to a smaller scale, in Korea, (pending reunification) and move them to Guam. As pointed out by the RAND study, the Philippines, Northwest Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand are all within comfortable range of proposed U.S. Air Force air assets. China, Taiwan and Japan are also within effective striking distance with long range, high-speed heavy bombers, capable of delivering sizable numbers of munitions. The U.S. Navy, with its continuously moving aircraft carrier task forces can also quickly move into any area in the Asia Pacific region.

Third, another argument for expanding Guam as a hub is the fact that the Marianas have a valuable asset that Hawaii and the east and west coasts of the U.S. no longer have: an uninhabited island for naval gunnery and aircraft target practice. The Farallon de Mendinilla Island north of Saipan and Tinian is currently being used by both the U.S. Navy and Air Force and allies for target practice. Guam and the CNMI do not have radical protestors fighting the U.S. not to use the island. On the contrary, the islands promote its usage.

Fourth, it is in the best interests of the U.S. to invest U.S. taxpayer dollars on U.S. soil for the benefit of Americans and U.S. servicemen living in Guam. Granted, the U.S. may have to invest several hundred million or several billion dollars to fortify Guam (and possibly some of the other Mariana islands) and accommodate the stationing of large units in the area, but such investments in our national security are not wasted on U.S. soil. U.S. military spending for infra structure development in the Philippines was lost when Filipino nationalism forced us out. And when we move from Korea and Japan, any expenditure of U.S. dollars there would be lost as well. But it can never be lost on U.S. soil. Even if decades from now, bases in Guam and the Northern Marianas should close down or be downsized, American citizens and not foreign nationals would benefit from them.

Fifth, if Guam is properly used, it can be used as a launching pad for power projection into any Asian "hot spot" or crisis much like in World War II against Japan. On the one hand, Guam is close enough to Asia to ensure U.S. military forward presence in the region to deter aggression against U.S. and allied interests on a timely basis. On the other hand, it is far enough away from China to reduce its concerns about immediate U.S. presence.

Sixth, in addition to the U.S. Navy's expansion through the home porting of submarines, the U.S. Air Force is following the dictate of the 2001 QDR. It is already working to provide "sufficient enroute infrastructures for refueling and logistics to support operations in...Western Pacific areas." An \$85 million fuel storage facility is being constructed on Andersen Air Force Base. When completed, it will be the largest fuel storage facility outside of the continental U.S.

with storage capacity for a month of fuel for aircraft. While the 2001 QDR makes no mention of the basing of 150-200 aircraft as RAND recommended, it is hoped that this will occur once the fuel storage facility is completed. There is more than ample room at Andersen AFB for 200 aircraft, especially since hundreds were parked there during W W II and Vietnam Conflict. Also, it makes no sense for B-2 bombers to fly from Whiteman AFB, Missouri, all the way to Afghanistan, drop bombs, fly to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, change crews and go all the way back to Whiteman. It took a total of 70 hours for each plane to accomplish its missions during the first three days of war in Afghanistan where the B-2's were used. Where is the sense in that? These bombers should be stationed on Guam where many, many hours of flight time can be eliminated. In the meantime, the Air Force is periodically deploying B-52 and B-2 bombers on Guam for power projection into Asia.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIC COURSES OF ACTION

There is no question that the Asia-Pacific region is a volatile hotbed of conflicts. It is anyone's guess what will happen in the future. No one can accurately predict what the potentially biggest threat to the region, China, will do. China has been putting out mixed signals but has generally behaved itself with its neighbors. Whether the opening up of China and its growing economy and sophistication will influence it to take its place in the civilized world remains to be seen. Until then, the U.S must come up with possible scenarios to deal with China, the two Koreas, and Japan. Therefore, the U.S. military has at least five possible courses of action it could consider relative to forward military presence in the region consistent with the U.S. national strategy based on regional stability:

- 1. Retain the current level of U.S. military presence in Korea, Japan, and Guam.
- Withdraw entirely from Asia-Pacific. This will create a power vacuum with China,
 Korea, Japan, India or even Russia (if it recovers), vying to be the dominant power.
- 3. Expand the U.S. military presence in Korea and Japan. However, this may be a catalyst for China and some other emerging power in the region to expedite its military expansion and modernization at all costs.
- 4. Decrease U.S. military presence in the region probably U.S. Naval, Marine, and Air Force units from Japan and Okinawa and a token Army battalion from Korea as an interim action pending reunification of the two Koreas, promote the establishment of emergency staging bases in willing countries, move withdrawn personnel and equipmet to Guam and expand and develop the island as a forward operations hub, projecting power into Asia from there.

5. Upon reunification of the two Koreas, withdraw and transfer all remaining military forces and equipment from the Asia-Pacific region to Guam and perhaps, other sister islands in the Northern Marianas, using the them as a power projection bases similar to their use in WW II.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- For the short term, the U.S. military should remain in Korea until the unification of the two Koreas. As for Japan and its southern province, Okinawa, the Navy should plan to move at least one or two carrier battle groups to Guam once facilities in Guam are upgraded to handle them. The U.S. Marines and Air Force should also move some of their units to Guam to reduce tensions and animosity with the Okinawans. Therefore, contingency planning should be done now to effectuate this scenario. This should also include the possibility of the Japanese successfully amend its constitution to provide for its own defense and to operate externally of its borders. If this occurs, the U.S. must withdraw all remaining forces from this country to Guam.
- In anticipation of the reunification of the two Koreas, the U.S. military should initiate long-term planning now to move all of its personnel, weapons, aircraft, ships, equipment, and logistics to Guam and the Marianas. This planning should be done jointly with Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands since base development and expansion will affect local infrastructure in the areas of roads, water and sewer, electrical generation, telecommunications, and the like. It is estimated that the cost of such improvements along with the construction or renovation of bases and necessary military infrastructure will cost several billion dollars.

CONCLUSION

There is much to recommend course of action number 4 as an interim action pending the reunification of the two Koreas. This would reduce tensions in the Western Pacific. A decrease in our military presence will lessen China's concern about U.S. dominance and suspicions about our intentions. This should further reduce their incentive for military expansion and modernization. If and when the two Koreas unite and the Japanese decide to amend its constitution and take responsibility for their own national defense without the presence of U.S. forces within their country (with adequate assurances to the world and especially to its former victims during World War II of its denouncement of imperialism), the U.S. will be hard-pressed to justify the maintenance of bases in those countries. If China

becomes a democracy, the U.S. and other Asian nations can seek true friendship and for the larger part, peaceful coexistence among nations in the region can finally take place. Idelly, the U.S. will ally itself with a new democracy and China, with U.S. presence in Guam, can act as partners and guarantors of regional stability and peace.

Whenever the two Koreas unite, course of action 5 is a better choice. This action would positively lessen tensions regarding China. Both Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan and Tinian) are U.S. territories and the U.S. has an inherent right to expand its military forces on its own soil. The U.S. also has basing rights in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The strategic withdrawal (not retreat) of U.S. military forces to the Mariana Islands and the expansion of bases and infrastructure would be akin to what the U.S. did during World War II under Admiral Nimitz.

Let us not forget our technological know how. We have the potential to invent new aircraft and weaponry that will eliminate the disadvantage of being farther away in Guam and the Marianas. As we invent newer aircraft that are able to fly faster and farther with no need for in-air refueling that can still deliver an equally lethal but lighter payload, Guam and its sister islands will become more and more ideal as a forward base.

Withdrawing to the Marianas is not abandoning our friends and allies in the region. They will know that we are nearby on U.S. soil, where the U.S. has an inherent right to be, keeping an eye out for them just several hours away by air and several days by sea. As part of that strategy, U.S. military forces will constantly be flying and sailing from Guam and visiting all our Asian friends and allies, just let them know we are in the neighborhood.

Sooner or later, the U.S. will have to move out of it current bases in Korea and Japan. Sooner is better than later. The longer the U.S. delays in withdrawing to Guam, the more expensive it will cost to construct the needed infrastructure.

WORD COUNT=9,229

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